

Rep. David Rouzer (NC-07)
Veterans Affairs Member Day

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of this distinguished committee for your work to strengthen care and resources for our nation's heroes. I am particularly grateful for your willingness to allow members who do not serve on this committee the opportunity to raise issues and share concerns that we hear from veterans back home.

The great state of North Carolina has a long, rich tradition of military service and we are blessed to have a large community of veterans in the 7th Congressional District, which I have the honor to serve and represent.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to bring the Committee's attention to a bill I reintroduced to help veterans restore their credit score when it has taken a hit because the VA failed to reimburse an outside provider.

This is an issue that has been faced by many veterans in my district, and my office has helped facilitate hundreds of payments to outside providers by intervening with the VA to avoid a debt going to collection. And the unfortunate reality is that there are many, many veterans across my district, state and our country that have had their

credit destroyed, through no fault of their own, as a result of mismanagement and delays at the VA, specifically dealing with emergency medical care.

This is simply unacceptable.

H.R. 3012, the Veterans' Credit Protection Act, if enacted into law, will help restore faith in the VA and provide veterans the help they need to restore their credit when they have been the casualty of mismanagement and late payments, and in many cases, no payment at all made by the VA to the outside providers of their care.

The Veterans' Credit Protection Act puts the onus on the VA to reach out to the veteran and inform them how to resolve credit issues caused by these delayed payments. In addition, this legislation requires the VA to submit a report to Congress on the effectiveness of the Office of Community Care in providing timely payment of proper invoices for emergency care.

I appreciate the Committee's consideration of this bill as soon as possible so that veterans will no longer have to worry about their credit because of the VA's failure to pay their claims.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman, for allowing me the opportunity to testify today on this very important issue.